

African American Advisory Council Minutes

Tracy Marshall, Chairperson

Keith Smith, Vice-Chairperson

September 19, 2019

ATTENDEES:

Robin Albritton
Shirley Barsh
James Bracey
Tanya Carriere
Fayette Coleman-Gill
Carole Freeman
Angela Hassell
Tracy Marshall
Jere Murry
Kilonzo Musau
Keith D. Smith
Lori Welcher-Evans

Phone Participant

Relunda Washington

Excused Members

Renee Heard
Jacque Johnson
Rhonda Laye
Veronica Mattison

The meeting was officially called to order by Chairperson, Tracy Marshall at 10:30am.

ORDER OF MEETING:

REVIEW OF MINUTES:

The minutes for August were reviewed. It was moved by James and second by Robin that the minutes be accepted pending corrections made.

CHAIRPERSON REPORT:

Tracy Marshall gave the Chairperson's report and stated the following:

- Central region council members were thanked for hosting today's meeting and Jere was thanked for opening up her office at LSSI.

- Special guest, Shawn Eddings, Chief of African American Services was welcomed by the council. Ms. Eddings is the former General Counsel and she is very knowledgeable, and has been involved in meetings related to the different councils.
- Tracy shared the letter that she wrote and sent to the Director on behalf of the council. She related that Danielle Fitzgerald reported that the Director proposed that councils have a joint Summit/Conference. Each council prepared a letter to the Acting Director stating why councils do not want this to occur.
- Tracy received a call from Danielle Fitzgerald on Monday, stating that he met with the Acting Director on Friday and he is willing to take everything under consideration, and he is awaiting to hear the final determination.
- The council has allocated money in the budget for the fiscal year 2020 to have a conference.
- Fayette inquired if copies of how councils operate can be given to the Director so he can have a basic understanding of the purpose and vision of each council.
- Carol Melton, Ethics Officer keeps councils on track, however, it needs to be differentiated between those who are appointed versus those who are volunteers on councils and how the open meetings act does not relate to the council.
- Shawn stated that Stefanie Polacheck requested the definition of what all councils do. Jere suggested that we be specific in what the council provides as to how it operates.
- Shawn is going to assist the council with getting back on track as it relates to the Open Meetings Act. New council members, Tanya and Reginald need to complete the Open Meetings Act.
- Tracy made mention of an event that is being hosted by the Black Social Workers on Saturday, November 2nd from 12-4pm, tickets are \$100.
- Tracy encouraged members to respond to emails that are being sent.

NEWSLETTER:

Tracy reported that she is not sure about the leadership of this committee. Vice-Chairperson, Keith D. Smith agreed to step up and chair this committee. Tracy indicated that she would like the council to get a newsletter out by the end of October. Shawn agreed to assist with the committee. It was determined that the new Regional Administrator, Marnita Martin-Harris and Shawn will be interviewed and featured in the upcoming newsletter. If any council member becomes aware of any new appointments, please send information to both Tracy and Keith. Conference write-ups need to be pulled together. Lori remains on the

newsletter committee. Fayette, Robin and Tracy serve as proofreaders. A suggestion was made that council members names be added to make our letterhead stand out.


AFRICAN AMERICAN SERVICES:

Following introductions of the council's new liaison, Shawn provided some background information regarding her work at the Department over the last 15 years. Shawn is working on the Safe Sleep Initiative within the Department and currently has two groups committed as of now: the Ladies of Alpha Kappa Alpha and a Construction Company. Shawn is looking to get at least 14 more groups to make a commitment. Shawn is working on placements for your youth, looking at discipline of African Americans, tracking data and statistics, was in Success Academy, being a servant leader and felt very supported. Angela related that African American staff looks a little different in that staff may not know what's going on, staff is spread out, and the needs are different from Cook county. The guidance that is offered to the LGBTQ population should be just as viable for African Americans. Transformation teams in Central region and Action teams in Champaign are active. Information needs to be updated on the council's website. James related that action teams were created thru the council due to disproportionality of African American youth remaining in care too long or not being able to locate placements.

TRAINING COMMITTEE:

No report. This agenda item was tabled.

STATUS REPORT-HOST FAMILIES/CARE PACKAGES:

Breanna has new address and phone number 3500 John A Merritt Blvd. Apt 1303, Nashville Tennessee. Her phone number is 615 669-0667. She has 3 roommates where she has own room but shares common areas. Breanna Sanders is currently a Senior at the Illustrious Tennessee State University  majoring in Family and Consumer Sciences w/ a Concentration in Foods and Nutrition. She is studying to become a Registered Dietician. Breanna is scheduled to graduate in May 2020. She is currently taking classes in Quality Food Procurement and Managerial Tactics, Medical Nutrition Therapy 1, Life Span Nutrition, Organic Chemistry 1 lecture and lab, University Choir, and Family Resource Management. Breanna has secured employment at St. Thomas Midtown Hospital as a Nutrition Operator in their Food Service Department/Kitchen. She has 18 more credit hours plus an internship before I graduate (spring 2020). Breanna has not followed up with securing needed doctor's appointments

because she states she has been lazy. After Graduation Breanna plans to serve in the United States Coast Guard.

Shout out to Kilonzo for meeting obligation for June for himself and to cover donation for member who is no longer on council.

Host Family obligations for July, August and September have been requested from council members.

Breanna needed funds to purchase books \$220. I sent her \$320 on behalf of council to cover personal needs and books.

MEMBERSHIP:

Robin reported that the membership committee met 9-18-19, and there were 4 committee members on the call. Three members were excused. There is a slot open for someone else to join the membership committee. This committee is discussing how to address inactive membership, and will be sending out letters within the next week to members who have not been actively participating on the council. The purpose is for inactive members to understand what the council's mission, vision and purpose is. Slots for membership will be added to each region so that there is cross-regional participation. Numbers and data will be looked at. Robin requested that a sub-committee be formed and Tanya Carriere volunteered. Robin related that this committee have regular meetings on Tuesdays in which they will continue working on the by-laws, and revising the interview questions as well as developing a new onboarding process for members. The membership committee will be keeping track of attendance so if council members are unable to attend a meeting, members are to send an email to Keith, Tracy and Lori. Members of this committee are as follow: Fayette, Carole, Tracy, Relunda, Robin, Jacque and Shirley.

LEGISLATIVE:

Jere highlighted two Bills; HB 1482 whereby this is the Pam Knight Bill which passed in the House on April 3rd; and HB 1438 impacts the Department, whereby cannabis will be legalized. There will be added medical conditions and there will need to be a justification process.

HB 1482 – Criminal Code-Aggravated Battery-Employees

This bill will amend the Criminal Code of 2012. It would provide that a person also commits aggravated battery when, in committing a battery, other than by the discharge of a firearm, he or she knowingly causes great bodily harm or permanent disability or disfigurement to an individual

whom the person knows to be a person working under the Adult Protective Services or an Ombudsman under the State Long Term Care Ombudsman Program of the Dept of Aging and DCFS employee performing their duties. This is a Class 1 Felony.

This bill was filed with the House on 1/29/19 by Rep. Tony McCombie. After going through 3 readings in the House it was finally passed on 4/3/19. That same day it arrived at the Senate and that's where it sits for now. The Senate Chairperson for this bill is Kimberly Lightford and at this time there has been no action on this proposed bill by the Senate since 5/31/19. No further hearings have been scheduled at this time.

HB 1438

This is an Act concerning the regulation of cannabis. This Act is also referenced as the Cannabis Regulation and Tax Act.

It sets out general parameters around the regulation of cannabis manufacturing, selling, and distributing. Generally speaking it will be regulated much like alcohol is now. An individual must be 21 and show proof of age. You cannot operate a motor vehicle under the influence of cannabis, etc. Cannabis purchasers must be made aware of the testing completed, health risks associated with the use of cannabis, and it must be labeled.

REAL TALK:

Carole provided Shawn Eddings with an overview of Real Talk. Carole reported that she sent an email to Southern, Northern and Central regions regarding partnering with them in the upcoming year, and received an immediate response back. Carole reported that the committee needs to work on securing a guest speaker. Carole further reported that committee meetings will begin during the 1st week in November at 12:00noon. The council needs a guest speaker in the Southern region that can relate to youth. It has been determined that the council will focus on only two regions for Real Talk. The possible contacts are Regina Powell who can be found in outlook. Tiffany Gholson-Johnson is the contact for the Southern region. Keith Smith as well Shawn Eddings agreed to provide contacts for Northern region for a guest speaker. The date for the summit in Northern region is possibly scheduled for either June 11th or 18th at Kishwaukee College. Members of this committee are comprised of Tanya, Fayette, Lori, Tracy, Robin and Carole.

JOINT COUNCIL REPORT:

The follow-up letter was sent to Acting Director Smith. Since the previous letter was forwarded to former Director BJ Walker, it will be attached to

the newly developed letter. The Department still has some interns. The African American Advisory Council will be hosting the next joint council meeting on the 3rd Thursday in January 2020 at 1911 S. Indiana. Tracy thanked Lori for submitting the minutes in a timely manner.

CONFERENCE:

- South Suburban is under new management, and now charging.
- Tracy reported that the Department will have a conversation with the College President, Lynette Stokes, as the amount to rent could be more than half of the council's budget.
- The council will look at the Dnet for city colleges who have a partnership with the Department.
- A presenter as well as a guest speaker for free is being sought.
- The books from the conference remain outstanding.

BUSINESS UPDATES:

NEW BUSINESS:

- This will be year 28 for the conference.
- Everyone please keep Veronica in your prayers.
- A subcommittee is needed to work on a project for updating the trifold and the hand-out for the AAAC. A suggestion was made to do a public service announcement or a video. Shawn, Jere, Angela and Lori volunteered to be on the subcommittee.
- Road to Recognition is about a booklet that was developed back in the day in which talked about the history of the council, etc.
- The council will reach out to Mr. Pemberton and inquire about his website that he wanted the council to be a part of.

The meeting was officially adjourned at 1:52pm.

The next meeting is scheduled to take place October 17, 2019 in Northern region.

Submitted by:

Lori Welcher-Evans, Secretary